

hospitality design



By JoAnn Greco and Alia Akkam

NEW LUXURY

Boston celebrates its past with an eye toward the future



With its blend of tradition and tech, Boston has always been a cosmopolitan city with a small town feel. A recent spate of hotel development—some 7,000 new rooms are expected to come online in the next five years—echoes that sentiment with a mix of big brands and boutique properties entering the market. Here, we spotlight six that are reshaping the city's skyline by offering lavish experiences in the historic American city.

Raffles Back Bay Hotel & Residences

When it debuts in 2022, the new-build, LEED Gold \$400 million Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences will be the first by the ultra-luxury brand to open in North America. Featuring architecture by local firm the Architectural Team, the 35-story mixed-use building will offer 147 guestrooms and residences crafted by New York's Stonhill Taylor and Rockwell Group, respectively. "We aimed to create an unparalleled destination," says Bethany Gale, interiors associate at Stonhill Taylor, which also handled the public spaces. A spiraling staircase spans the three-story Sky Lobby atrium, making a dramatic first impression. Further reflecting its location,

fluted columns resemble those of the neighboring Boston Public Library and hanging plants that spill from windows reference window boxes that appear in Back Bay residences. "A copper-accented herringbone-patterned floor anchors the area," adds Gale, "while dappled ceiling lights evoke the feeling of a starry sky above."

The Whitney Hotel

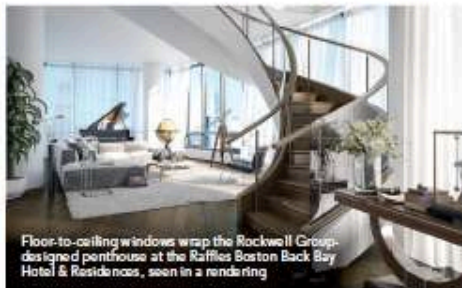
Residing in the tony Beacon Hill neighborhood, the 87-room hotel, recently honored by the Boston Preservation Alliance, melds a 1908-era former nurses' residence with a red brick addition, courtesy of Haetrn + Associates, whose curving facade wraps what was a long-vacant corner of Charles and Cambridge streets. Public spaces include a courtyard garden that



A view from a balcony at the 35-story Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences, slated to open in 2022



A rendering of the oak-clad spiral staircase in the Raffles Boston Back Bay



Floor-to-ceiling windows wrap the Rockwell Group-designed penthouse at the Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences, seen in a rendering



Seen in a rendering, the chandelier in the Sky Lobby restaurant at the Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences is inspired by the palm styling of the Raffles logo



Peregrine restaurant in the Whitney showcases a navy, tobacco, and gray color palette

Photos by JAMES BAIGRIE and renderings courtesy of STONEHILL TAYLOR, ROCKWELL GROUP, and THE ARCHITECTURAL TEAM

nods to the charming hideaways tucked behind neighborhood residences, and an open lobby with a sitting area, bar, and Peregrine restaurant. For the interiors, Portland, Maine's Kalain Studios went with a navy, tobacco, and gray palette that recalls Beacon Hill homes. "The luxury comes from its intimacy," says Kalain Studios' principal Jacqueline McGee, "like a good friend has invited you to hang out at their place. The finishes are luxe, but everything feels welcoming."

The Newbury Boston

Overlooking the Boston Public Garden, the 286-room Newbury Boston is a renovation and reflag of a 1927 building that originally housed a Ritz-Carlton, and more recently, a Taj hotel. "A reimagining was long overdue," says Christina Zimmer, senior vice president of design at hospitality investment and management firm Highgate. Charged with the common areas, including a new entry on Newbury Street, New York-based designer Jeffrey Boers recognized the importance of capturing "the nostalgia of a bygone era while also reviving the hotel with contemporary design choices," he says. Warm wood paneling and rich blue and green saturate the Library and the Street Bar, while guestrooms by Champalmaud Design are "peaceful and monochromatic," says Elisabeth Rogoff, principal at the New York firm. "We wanted to give the green gardens the spotlight and enhanced that view by placing bench seating wherever we could." To top it off, a 4,000-square-foot, glass-encased rooftop promises more views and moments of whimsy, courtesy of Ken Fulk's eclectic eye.

Mandarin Oriental, Boston

Champalmaud is also behind a \$15 million revamp of the event spaces and 148 guestrooms at the Mandarin Oriental, which opened in 2008 in a purpose-built Back Bay building. "One of the things we considered was a response to the popularity of Airbnb, so we created a beautiful lacquered millwork piece in the entry that serves as a mini kitchenette," says firm CEO and partner Ed Balos. That attention to detail is also evident in the plaid-patterned leathers and midcentury chairs, while nods to the brand's Asian heritage appear everywhere from the use of lacquer and Chinese-inspired accent wallpaper to lattice and bamboo motifs.

Four Seasons One Dalton Street

Drawing accolades for its architecture, a triangular 61-story glass tower from Henry Cobb of New York's Pei Cobb Freed with locally based Cambridge Seven Associates, the 215-key Back Bay entry makes Boston one of only a handful of



The Langham, Boston's lobby nods to its former life as the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston with a color palette inspired by the U.S. dollar



The Mandarin Oriental, Boston's Royal suite reveals a ceiling installation of plum blossom petals



The Four Seasons One Dalton Street's lobby rotunda is centered around a dramatic chandelier



Wood accents and rich blue and green hues saturate the Library at the Newbury Boston

Photos by NIKOIAS KOENIG and courtesy of RICHMOND INTERNATIONAL, BILL ROONEY STUDIO, and CHAMPA UMALAU

U.S. cities to offer two properties from the upscale brand. "We wanted to define a new luxury option that's rooted in a sense of place," says designer Bill Rooney, who has offices in New York and Bernardsville, New Jersey. "You see that in the materials, including polished mahogany and local granite, and the herringbone, windowpane, and wood patternings." A vigorous art program showcases work by Yinka Shonibare, Louise Nevelson, and Alex Katz, while expansive windows take advantage of the building's shape and location. Rooney also designed One + One restaurant and the street-level lobby bar Trifecta. A slew of other designers helped bring the project to life: New York's Thierry Despont outfitted the lobby for the 174-unit residential component, and Tokyo firm Studio Gitti handled interiors for Japanese restaurant chain Zuma.

The Langham, Boston

When the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston first opened in 1922, the Renaissance Revival structure dazzled with its gilded coffered ceiling and N.C. Wyeth murals. Since 2004, the architectural landmark has been home to the Langham, Boston, and now, after a multimillion-dollar refurbishment by local architecture firm Dyer Brown and London-based Richmond International, the hotel blends a burnished history with contemporary warmth. (Down the street, the InterContinental Boston is also undergoing a refresh.) A longtime Langham collaborator, Richmond International wanted to create inviting interiors that were "the antithesis of the imposing façade," says principal Fiona Thompson, noting the "fortress-like" building's "strong and grand granite exterior."

In the guestrooms, references to the past include wood-framed wardrobes with metal and glass inserts that echo the bank's original windows, and glossy timber and leather cellarettes styled as trunks that nod "to the campaign era of travel," Thompson says. This homage to heritage is mirrored in the public spaces. Restored terrazzo, for example, encircles a polished brass Federal Bank seal in the center of the floor at the new restaurant Grana, and at reception, metal relief panels depict aerial views and maps of Massachusetts. The inviting green color scheme, explains Thompson, recalls the U.S. dollar "and an ambience inspired by a gentleman's club." hd

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